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ABSTRACT

This is a manual for teachers of Indochinese students. The manual begins with brief cultural, linguistic, and historical descriptions of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodian people. The tenets of animism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Christianity, as practiced in Indochina are reviewed. Also discussed are Indochinese attitudes toward learning and formal education. Various classroom considerations are then outlined which emphasize the need to help the Indochinese student adjust to both a new way of life and a new learning environment and communication techniques to be used when counseling Indochinese students are also suggested. Finally, a series of activities for teaching English, which focus on phonology, morphology and syntax, are provided. (APM)



**A MANUAL FOR
TEACHERS OF
INDOCHINESE STUDENTS**

DAM TRUNG PHAP, PH.D.



**INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**

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A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS OF INDOCHINESE STUDENTS

Dam Trung Phap, Ph.D.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Educated in Vietnam and in the United States, Dr. Dam Trung Phap is a linguist fluent in several languages. He has taught linguistics and languages at the University of Saigon, the University of Maryland, San Antonio College, and Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio. From 1969 to 1975, he was Dean of the University of Saigon School of Languages.

Dr. Phap is currently with the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) in San Antonio, Texas, where he has published A Contrastive Approach For Teaching English As A Second Language To Indochinese Students (1980), The IDRA Structured Language Interview (1981), and The IDRA Oral Language Dominance Test Series (1981). He has also conducted workshops throughout the United States on cultural awareness, ESL methodology, and multicultural education.

FOREWORD

Since the Communist takeover of Indochina in 1975, school districts throughout the United States have enrolled an ever-increasing number of Indochinese refugee children.

Educating these culturally different and limited English proficient youngsters has indeed been a challenge for the school districts involved. Teachers having Indochinese students in their classes often wonder whether they are adequately educating their newly immigrated students. They also have numerous questions regarding the Indochinese culture, the proper techniques for teaching English and content area lessons, and so on. To help American teachers find answers to these questions, Dr. Dam Trung Phap, a distinguished educator from Vietnam currently with the Intercultural Development Research Association, has just published A Manual For Teachers Of Indochinese Students.

The manual provides enlightening insights into the Indochinese culture and suggests viable ways to treat, counsel and teach the Indochinese boys and girls effectively in light of the cultural, linguistic and psychosocial differences.

I have enjoyed reading Dr. Phap's manual, and it is with pleasure that I recommend it to American teachers of Indochinese students.

March 1981

Dr. Gloria Zamora, Director
Desegregation Assistance Center
For National Origin
Intercultural Development Research
Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE INDOCHINESE CULTURES	9
Peoples and Ways of Life	11
Religions	15
Languages	18
Education and Learning Setting	20
 CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDOCHINESE STUDENTS	 21
 COUNSELING THE INDOCHINESE STUDENTS	 29
 TEACHING ENGLISH TO INDOCHINESE STUDENTS THE CONTRASTIVE WAY	 33
Phonology	35
Morphology	39
Syntax	40
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 44



THE
INDOCHINESE
CULTURES

PEOPLES AND WAYS OF LIFE

Indochina is the name that French colonists gave to what is now Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, and refers to the mixture of Indian and Chinese influences in the culture of the region. The French, who wanted to see Indochina as a separate entity, were ruling it from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th.

Laos

A small, land-locked country, Laos has an area of 91,000 square miles. Slightly smaller than Oregon, Laos is largely jungle and mountains. Laos used to have two capitals: Vientiane (administrative) and Luang Prabang (royal).

About 90 percent of the three million Laotians are engaged in wet rice farming. The Lao farmers live in villages that range between 50 and 2,000 people. These villages are usually located near rivers and roads. Life in the village is peaceful and simple. Every village has a pagoda and supports at least one Buddhist monk. While the village chief has authority in administrative matters, the monk is in charge of religious matters. Urban life in Laos is limited to the large cities, and the Lao elite tends to be Westernized in lifestyle and dress.

The Laotians have a relaxed attitude toward life -- many of them choose to live on a day-to-day basis. They are among the most peace-loving Asians with their take it easy attitude. They do not like to rush, and for them, time is "elastic."

Laotians consider their body to be sacred, and the degree of sacredness grows from the feet to the top of the head. It is strictly forbidden to touch someone's head. To express their respect or appreciation, Laotians use their graceful "wai" -- joining hands together, raising them up to the chest or higher, and bowing the head. The "wai" is also used for greeting and saying

goodbye. The higher the hands are raised, the more respect is shown -- up to the head for parents or teachers, and over the head for God.

A Lao family is both nuclear and extended. Members of up to four or five generations may live in the same house. Children are taught that they must obey and respect their parents. Generally speaking, Lao women are less liberated than American women. When a young woman is allowed to go out with her suitor, she is always very closely chaperoned. Quite often, courting looks like a family celebration! To the Lao people, a woman who holds the hand of a man is considered of easy virtue. A Lao woman will feel disgraced if a man touches her in public -- kissing in public is unthinkable. Lao women must obey their parents when single, and they are submissive to their husbands when married.

The Laotians are well-known for their hospitality, and sharing family meals symbolizes friendship and affection. Visitors arriving at mealtime, whether announced or not, are invited to eat with the family. Unlike Americans, Laotians seldom vocalize their feelings. They feel that their presence on important occasions (e.g., wedding ceremonies, funerals) is enough to show their care, love or friendship.

Vietnam

Vietnam, with an area of 127,000 square miles, is roughly the size of New Mexico. Vietnam is long and narrow, with a coastline of 1,400 miles. About 25 percent of the country is readily arable, including the densely settled Red River Valley in the North and the fertile Mekong River Delta in the South. The remainder of the country consists of semi-arid plateaux, barren mountains, and stretches of tropical rain forest. Before April 1975, there were two Vietnams: North Vietnam (capital: Hanoi) and South Vietnam (capital: Saigon).

Vietnam has a population of 50 million. The traditional belief that the

Vietnamese came from the Viets of South China has been abandoned. The dominant view now is that the Vietnamese originated in the Red River Delta and represent a racial and cultural fusion of Indonesians, Austroasiatics, Viet and Tai immigrants, and Chinese soldiers and scholars. Between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D., the Vietnamese formed as an ethnic entity through a fusion of these elements. For over one thousand years, Vietnam was under Chinese rule (111 B.C. - 939 A.D.). Chinese civilization thus became the principal force in shaping the Vietnamese culture.

Generally speaking, the Vietnamese are industrious and willing to do things "the hard way." They are also "heart-oriented," if heart is synonymous with sentiments that affect people's behavior apart from the dictate of reason. There exists a distinct preference among the Vietnamese for sentimental literature and music. Sad songs and novels depicting unrequited love or untimely death are always popular. A Vietnamese funeral is extremely saddening. The bereaved, wearing sackcloth and letting the hair go unkempt, wail unabashedly, uncontrollably and long-windedly.

Interpersonal relationships in Vietnam are much more formal than those in America. The Vietnamese place a higher value on protocol, decorum and ceremoniousness. This formality comes from the deeply ingrained Confucian concept of propriety in interpersonal relationships. The Vietnamese word for politeness, "lễ phép," literally means "rules of propriety," and the Vietnamese personal pronoun "tôi" ("I") also means "servant" or "subordinate." They respect old age, and particularly value the advice given by old people. A popular Vietnamese proverb says, "The 70-year-old should listen to the 71-year-old."

The Vietnamese believe that punctuality is not necessary and that time should be "elastic." This concept goes well with agricultural societies in Indochina, but not as well in the highly industrialized United States. The Vietnamese maintain a pluralistic approach to life; they generally tolerate

more than one absolute standard for anything. Hence, a Vietnamese Buddhist or Confucianist thinks nothing of going to a Christian church to pray.

The Vietnamese, like other Asians, feel that it is impolite to look in the eye of people to whom they are talking. In ancient China or Vietnam, anyone who was foolish enough to look straight at the Emperor's face would certainly be severely punished.

The most important holiday for the Vietnamese is "Tết," which is the first three days of the first month of the Lunar New Year, and solemnly celebrated by the Vietnamese and Chinese alike. This is time to pay homage to ancestors, to visit relatives and friends, and last but not least, to make merry. "Tết" is also everyone's birthday.

Cambodia

Cambodia is about the size of North Dakota, and has a land area of 70,000 square miles, three-fourths of which is forested. Like Laos and Vietnam, Cambodia has a tropical climate. Its capital is Phnom Penh.

When Cambodia fell into Communist hands in 1975, it had a population of about seven million. Since then, countless Cambodians have perished. Like Laos, Cambodia is a country of villages, with only ten percent of the population living in urban areas. As a basic societal unit, the Cambodian village is second only to the family. Villagers share one or more Buddhist temples, an elementary school, several small shops, and a market place. (Please note that much of what is said about the Lao or Vietnamese way of life is also true of the Cambodian.) A large Cambodian family frequently includes members of four or more generations!

In Cambodia, it is usually impolite to call people by their names, especially older people. The Indochinese use kinship terms such as big brother, little brother, uncle and aunt to address one another. The

traditional Cambodian greeting is just like the Lao "wai" or the Vietnamese "xá." At parties, men talk with men and women talk with women. Women are not supposed to intrude into men's conversations. Marriage is an extremely serious matter for the families of the bride and groom, and is usually arranged by the families concerned. When a Cambodian dies, his neighbors, friends and relatives must attend the funeral, even without being invited. The body is kept for a few days in a wooden coffin and then cremated. Like the Laotians, the Cambodians celebrate their New Year in April.

RELIGIONS

Animism

Animism is the belief that each person or object possesses a spirit that continues to exist after the person has died or the object has been destroyed. Indochinese Animists usually live in the countryside, and they believe that the spirits of dead people will not be troublemakers if proper rites are performed at burial. However, people who have died violently or whose bodies have not been properly buried are potential sources of fear because their spirits are thought to be angry. Throughout their lives, Animists have to please the spirits with elaborate ceremonies and pleading. It's a matter of year-round "trick or treat"!

Buddhism

The founder of Buddhism was Gautama, an Indian prince who at age 29 had abandoned his family and luxurious life to seek liberation from old age, sorrow, lamentation, grief and despair. After six years of searching, in the year 528 B.C., the great Illumination came to Gautama under the Bo tree. At the moment the Buddha (in Sanskrit, Buddha means "knowledge") was in a

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
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state of cosmic consciousness, he saw the whole where everything was situated in its place, and he felt peace, certainty and supreme freedom. Buddha had found the way to Nirvana, where the never-ending chain of human rebirths and sufferings would stop. Moved by an overwhelming compassion for mankind, Buddha revealed the secret to everyone. Thus, Buddhism was open to all, regardless of social caste, because Buddha considered all men to be equals. Buddhists are taught to abstain from sin, to do good works, to purify their minds, and to repay evil with good. Compassion is the most esteemed virtue in Buddhism. Buddhism is the national religion of Laos and Cambodia. It is also one of the main religions of Vietnam, the others being Taoism, Confucianism and Christianity.

Taoism

About six centuries before the birth of Christ, Taoism was founded in China by Lao Tseu (Chinese for "Old Master"). Taoism was brought to Vietnam by the invading Chinese armies. Even Lao Tseu himself could not define his own religion and he merely called it "Tao" or "The Way." Modeled after nature, Tao is like water, always benefiting things without claiming credit. Taoism may be considered romantic by some and passive by others. It does not encourage ambitions nor does it urge struggle or competition. "Wu'wei" (Chinese for "non-interference") is the first virtue of Taoism. Lao Tseu was probably the first scholar to put Chinese philosophy on a metaphysical basis. Taoists use magic, witchcraft, fortune-telling and astrology as part of their religious worship. Vietnam, like Laos and Cambodia, was a country of fortune-tellers. Leaders of South Vietnam often checked with their personal astrologers before making important decisions. Rich people paid geomancers much money for their advice on where, when and how to bury the deceased.

Confucianism

Founded by Confucius (551-479 B.C.), Confucianism epitomized the Chinese way of life for well over 2,000 years. It has been the prime force of social cohesion in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Confucius was also China's best-known and most revered teacher; therefore, Confucianism has been synonymous with learning in China, Vietnam and other Confucianist countries. Unlike Taoism and Buddhism, Confucianism is the ethic of man-in-society. People brought up in Confucian ethics feel that they do not exist for themselves but for others. Confucian teachings have man as the main theme. The Great Master taught such virtues as filial piety, loyalty, wisdom, love and courage. The cardinal virtue, however, is "Jen" (仁), which has been variously translated as humanity, love or great-heartedness.

One of the disciples asked Confucius for one precept that can guide action through life. The Great Master answered, "Love not to do to others what you do not wish done to yourself." For Confucius, the perfect individual was the "Chun-Tzu" (Chinese for "superior man" or "son of ruler") whose order of activities was as follows: (1) to improve himself, (2) to improve his family, (3) to make his country prosperous, and (4) to make the world peaceful. A "Chun-Tzu" was wise, benevolent and courageous. The Confucian moral code was stringent. Boys and girls were kept separate, even brothers and sisters. Boys were treated better than girls. Not to have a son to maintain the family line and to worship ancestors would be something terrible for a family. Concubines were always available to "son-hungry" men. And yet, romantic love was forbidden. Marriages were arranged by the families. People had to marry first and hopefully would fall in love later. In a Confucian society, the teacher has always had an honorable standing; Confucianism ranked the teacher just below the king and above the father.

Christianity

The first European missionaries arrived in Vietnam in the 16th century. Suspicious of Western influence brought in by French missionaries, Confucianist emperors of Vietnam began the vigorous persecution of Christian missionaries and Vietnamese converts. This gave France just the right pretext to realize her colonizing ambition. The religious persecution stopped when the whole country came under French control in 1884. Vietnam has about 1.5 million Roman Catholics and tens of thousands of Protestants.

LANGUAGES

Lao

One of the Tai languages of Southeast Asia, Lao is generally monosyllabic and uses tones to distinguish words that are otherwise pronounced alike. It is written in an alphabet derived from Cambodian, which in turn uses an Indian writing system. Inflections, suffixes, and verb tenses are unknown in Lao. Instead of articles, Lao has a system of classifiers. In Lao, adjectives follow the noun they modify; hence, "Two dogs chase a black cat" is expressed in Lao as, "Dog two chase cat black." Despite the strange word order, the basic sentence structure in the Lao sentence is the same as in English, i.e., subject-verb-object.

Khmer

Khmer (or Cambodian) is not a tone language. Most native Khmer words contain one or two syllables, while borrowings from Sanskrit and Pali are multisyllabic. While Khmer has only 17 consonants, it has 27 vowels. Khmer intonation patterns are very much like those in English; however, the pitch does not drop at the end of Khmer question-word questions. (At the end of an English question-word question, the pitch drops and fades away,

e.g., Who are you? ㄤ) Like Vietnamese and Lao, Khmer is an isolating language. This means Khmer does not signal syntactical relationships with suffixes like the English plural marker, "-s," or past tense marker, "-ed." Khmer sentences, like those of Vietnamese and Lao, frequently contain what is known as "topic" in modern linguistics. (The phrase "your father" in the following sentence is a "topic": Your father, I think he is very nice.) Khmer speakers have trouble producing the /f, g, z, and ʒ/ in English since these sounds are not common in their native tongue.

Vietnamese

A tone language, Vietnamese uses pitch level to differentiate vocabularies. Each Vietnamese syllable (or word, because Vietnamese is basically monosyllabic) has a tone of its own. For example, the tone (pitch level) going with the syllable MA is an integral part of it, not any less than the consonant M or the vowel A. The syllable MA can be uttered with six different tones to signal six different things:

<u>Tones</u>	<u>Vietnamese Spellings</u>	<u>English Meanings</u>
Level	MA	ghost
Hi-rising	MA'	mother
Low-falling	MA`	but
Low-rising	MA'	grave
High-broken	MA~	horse
Low-broken	MA	young rice plant

Word order is extremely sensitive in Vietnamese, in that by shuffling the same words around in a sentence, different meanings are conveyed:

ANH VỀ NHÀ "You come home."
 VỀ NHÀ ANH "Go to your home."

NHÀ VỀ ANH "The house is yours."
 ANH NHÀ VỀ "Your husband is coming back."

It would be disastrous if Vietnamese speakers used this syntactical device of their native tongue to learn English.

EDUCATION & LEARNING SETTING

The traditional Confucianist and Buddhist learning system was practically abandoned when the French conquered Indochina at the end of the 19th century. The Christian missionaries gave Vietnam the Romanized writing system, and the colonists imposed their French-based educational system on Indochina, from kindergarten to the university. The University of Hanoi was founded in 1908, where the elite of Indochina was trained by the French. In the last 20 years of a free Indochina, American influence was exerted considerably on the local education. Some colleges in Vietnam even adopted the American concept of credit-hour, the American testing method, and the American grading system. Despite all of the above, the Confucianist spirit was ubiquitous. Teachers were revered by students and parents alike. As a result, most teachers were authoritarian and kept a distance from their students. Students had to rise when a teacher entered the classroom and were taught to listen attentively to their teachers. Whatever the teacher said had to be correct, and it was unthinkable for a student to disagree with his or her teacher. School facilities were very modest; school libraries were virtually non-existent, except for large urban secondary schools and colleges. The Indochinese method of learning was bookish. Students took notes, memorized them, and, in lower grades, recited them verbatim in class. Students rarely volunteered answers to questions asked by teachers, partly because of their fear of losing face if giving the wrong answer and partly because they did not want to appear to be showing off. Parents had little opportunity to meet with their children's teachers, and PTA's were almost non-existent.



CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS
FOR INDOCHINESE
STUDENTS

Many of the Indochinese children currently being educated in the United States have grown up under wartime conditions, and bring with them memories of bombings, guerrilla attacks, and loss of family and loved ones. They have been violently uprooted from their homes, their way of life, and are forced to cope with a new language and a new culture in a foreign land. Teachers of Indochinese children have the special charge of providing a receptive, understanding environment, and have a great deal to contribute to these children becoming fulfilled and active participants in the life of their new country.

Language of Instruction

The preferred mode of instruction for the newly-immigrated Indochinese children is bilingual education.

However, if bilingual education is not feasible, American teachers should try their best to communicate in English with these limited-English-proficient children. It is important that the teacher enunciate clearly and slowly when talking to these students, and refrain from using colloquial and slang terms (e.g., "What's cooking?" or "I am just pulling your leg.") It is advisable that teachers use simple vocabulary and short simple sentences; for example, "Do this exercise," instead of "Complete the assignment at the end of the chapter if you feel like it." Teachers are encouraged to utilize the services of bilingual aides or interpreters to ensure communication with their students.

The Indochinese Names

For the Indochinese, it is the given name that counts in all situations. A Vietnamese or Cambodian full name is written this way:

FAMILY NAME ----- MIDDLE NAME (IF ANY) ----- GIVEN NAME

School children can be called by their given name alone, but adult

Indochinese should be called by their given name preceded by Miss, Mr., Mrs., or titles such as Dr., Rev., Captain. Note that the Laotians have no middle names, and their names are written in the same style as American names:

GIVEN NAME ----- FAMILY NAME

Hand Signals

It is important to be careful with hand signals when used to communicate with Indochinese students. The following signals must be avoided, at least at the beginning:

<u>Signals</u>	<u>American message</u>	<u>Indochinese message</u>
	Come here. (acceptable)	Come here, brat (or dog, cat, etc.)! (insulting)
	Perfect! (congratulatory)	Worthless! (insulting)

The Indochinese YES as an Answer

Be wary of the Indochinese "yes" as an answer to a negative or tag question. The Indochinese "yes" at the beginning of an answer is just a polite term that means, "Yes, I am listening to you." Culturally, it is very hard for them to say "no." So, concentrate on the rest of the answer, if any, for the right message. Answers like the following will be common from the Indochinese:

Questions

Don't you speak English?
You speak English, don't you?
You don't speak English, do you?

Indochinese Answers

Yes, I don't speak English.
Yes, I don't speak English.
Yes, I don't speak English.

Helping Indochinese Students Adjust to the New Learning Setting

Traditionally, Indochinese students, regardless of age, hold their teacher in awe and feel uneasy in his or her presence. Being shy or reserved is a polite attitude to show their respect to the teacher. Thus, a sincere and friendly (but not overwhelming) attitude from the American teacher will certainly make the students respond favorably. It is also a good idea that a couple of friendly classmates (of the same sex) be assigned to help an Indochinese student adjust to the new school environment. This "buddy system" will work wonders.

As mentioned earlier, rote learning and verbatim reciting characterizes the learning and teaching mode in Indochina. It is thought that this may make the students irresponsible and minimize their creativity. They have been brought up not to disagree with their teachers, who were usually stiff and aloof, and who discouraged class discussions. Indochinese students are also unfamiliar with library facilities and with looking for information by themselves. In addition, they are not used to long and extensive readings. The American teacher is accordingly advised to initiate the students gradually to extensive readings, obtaining information from library sources, and participating in class discussion. However, do not ask them to speak to the class too soon as this may embarrass them and inhibit their oral development.

The Indochinese use the French way of writing signs and symbols in the numerical system and in arithmetic:

<u>Indochinese</u>	<u>American</u>
7	7
0,500	.500 or 0.500
3.000	3,000

Division is done differently in Indochina. For instance, 75 divided by 5:

$$\begin{array}{r} 75 \overline{) 5} \\ 25 \quad 15 \\ 0 \end{array}$$

In Indochina, the metric and centigrade systems are utilized. Though schools in the U.S. are including these systems of measurement in their curriculum, Indochinese students will need to learn how many liters equal a gallon, how many grams equal a pound, how many degrees centigrade is equivalent to a temperature of 75 degrees Fahrenheit, etc.

Though classes having both boys and girls exist in Indochina, sexes are always separated in the Indochinese society. In a mixed class in Indochina, for example, the boys will invariably take up the back rows — never being allowed to share the same bench with the girls. So, do not assign the Indochinese students to work with members of the opposite sex, at least during the first few months of school.

As far as physical education is concerned, American teachers should not be surprised if Indochinese students are concerned about some of the American locker-room practices. Groups of naked boys or girls showering together is shocking and unheard of in Indochina. It may take quite some time for them to accept this perfectly normal American practice.

Because sex education is taboo in Indochina but an important subject in American schools today, Indochinese students will have to be introduced to this potentially embarrassing matter in a most delicate manner.

Helping Indochinese Students Adjust to the New Way of Life

While teachers are encouraged to try to understand the Indochinese students' cultural norms and to provide for cultural differences in the classroom, they should also make efforts to familiarize these students with

the American way of life. Tell them, for example, that in America it is usually not acceptable to ask a person's age, weight, or salary, and that it is considered bad manners to be late for an appointment, or to eat and drink noisily.

Teaching a Content Area Lesson

The following are suggestions that teachers may use to help limited English proficient Indochinese students get as much as possible out of a content area lesson:

- (1) Outline the lesson on the chalkboard.
- (2) Summarize the important points in simplified English on the chalkboard. Ask the students to write down the summary in their notebooks; if you have a bilingual aide, ask him or her to translate the summary into the students' native language to ensure comprehension.
- (3) Make a glossary of new vocabularies. Your bilingual aide can provide the equivalents in the students' native language. The glossary will be more helpful if the vocabulary items are listed in the order in which they appear in the lesson, rather than alphabetically.



COUNSELING
THE INDOCHINESE
STUDENTS

Counseling can be an effective means of helping recently immigrated Indochinese students adjust to their new environment. The Indochinese often misunderstand, and are misunderstood by, members of both the dominant culture and minority cultures in the United States. It is important that counselors working with Indochinese students become familiar with the differences which exist between the Indochinese and American cultures in order to help Indochinese students adjust to the mode of instruction in the United States and the sociological changes being asked of them.

The most important issue counselors must consider when working with special populations is the identification of that healthful and delicate balance between encouraging adaptation on the part of special population students, and the adaptation the institution must make in order to meet the needs of such students.

Counseling: A Novelty for Indochinese Students

In the highly structured Indochinese cultures, social order is rigid and definite roles are prescribed. Counseling and psychotherapy are virtually unknown in Indochina, where behavior is dictated by the authorities.

By understanding the Indochinese view of education and by contrasting this view with the American concept of education, the counselor can help bridge the differences. For example, Indochinese parents place a strong emphasis on academic excellence and tend to discourage non-academic activities. Counselors may, therefore, wish to discuss the American philosophy of extracurricular activities, their importance, and the benefits of non-academic activities. Also, most Indochinese parents believe that participation in their children's school is not encouraged. The counselor may wish to emphasize that in the United States, parents are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the school life.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Most Indochinese students in America are limited speakers of English. If an interpreter is used during a counseling interview, it is essential that he or she not impinge upon the counselor's role.

When speaking with limited English proficient Indochinese students, the counselor may find that communication is more effective if he or she enunciates clearly and slowly, refrains from using colloquial and slang terms, and uses simple vocabulary and short sentences.

Explicit communication from Indochinese students can be potentially frustrating, for responses may not be as expected. An Indochinese "yes," for instance, may not signal agreement or commitment, since it is usually a polite way of saying, "Yes, I am listening to you." Therefore, it would be advisable for the counselor to concentrate on the statement which follows the initial "yes" in order to correctly interpret the response.

Non-verbal responses (hand signals, smiles, eye contact, etc.) are culturally interpreted gestures. An Indochinese smile may seem inappropriate to Americans in a number of situations because it can also mean anger, embarrassment or refusal.

The Indochinese are family-oriented. It is essential, therefore, that the counseling process include parents and members of the family. The father has absolute authority in the patriarchal Indochinese society; failure to include him in the counseling process may impede the effort.

Sensitivity to the client's family, and understanding and respect for Indochinese ways of life constitute a solid foundation for establishing trust, and will facilitate the integration of Indochinese students into American schools and society.



TEACHING ENGLISH
TO INDOCHINESE STUDENTS
THE CONTRASTIVE WAY

English as a second language instruction cannot be effective if the students' linguistic background is ignored. Interference by native language habits is a serious problem in learning a second language. Therefore, teachers working with Indochinese students should focus on the following MAJOR potential problem areas (which have been pinpointed through a contrastive analysis of English and Indochinese languages in phonology, morphology and syntax) and the suggested activities for efficiently teaching in these problem areas.

PHONOLOGY

1. FOCUS:

The following vowels are difficult for Indochinese learners of English to produce:

/i/ as in bit /æ/ as in bad /u/ as in book

ACTIVITIES:

- Intensive verbatim repetition drills.
- For /æ/, the spread position of the lips should be emphasized. Ask the students to smile when producing this sound.
- Tell your students that /i/ sounds very much like the diphthong "iê" in Vietnamese. Thus, "bit" sounds almost like the Vietnamese word "biết" (to know).

2. FOCUS:

The following pairs of vowels are hard for Indochinese students to differentiate between:

/i/	as in <u>bit</u>	and	/iy/	as in <u>beat</u>
/æ/	as in <u>bad</u>	and	/e/	as in <u>bed</u>
/u/	as in <u>look</u>	and	/uw/	as in <u>Luke</u>

ACTIVITIES:

- Contrast between the production of /iy/ and /i/, and /uw/ and /u/ can be made more obvious by mentioning the muscular tension involved. While /i/ and /u/ are "lax," /iy/ and /uw/ are "tense."
- Say the words in pairs, and ask students to tell you if the words are the same or different. Add other minimal pairs.

3. FOCUS:

The following consonants are difficult for Indochinese students to produce:

/θ/	as in <u>th</u> igh
/ð/	as in <u>th</u> y
/ʃ/	as in <u>sh</u> e
/ʒ/	as in mea <u>su</u> re
/tʃ/	as in <u>ch</u> urch
/dʒ/	as in <u>j</u> udge

ACTIVITIES:

- Use verbatim repetition drills intensively.
- Describe the way in which the above sounds are produced.

4. FOCUS:

Indochinese students tend to replace the English consonants discussed in Item 3 with similar Indochinese sounds:

/θ/	→	/t, f, s/
/ð/	→	/z, d/
/ʃ/	→	/s/
/ʒ/	→	/z/
/tʃ/	→	/c/
/dʒ/	→	/z/

ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct intensive verbatim repetition and same-or-different response drills. Use the following minimal pairs and trios:

/θ/ - /ð/: teeth/teethe, thigh/thy, ether/either

/ð/ - /d/: those/dose, breathe/breed, soothe/sued

/ð/ - /z/: then/Zen, breathe/breeze, bathe/bays

/s/ - /ʃ/: sea/she, so/show, sock/shock

/θ/ - /f/ - /s/: thin/fin/sin, think/fink/sink

/θ/ - /t/ - /s/: thought/taught/sought, thank/tank/sank

5. FOCUS:

Indochinese students will not aspirate the English consonants /p, t, k/ at the initial position. This means that words like put, time, kick will not be pronounced by the students with a puff of air, as they should be.

ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct intensive verbatim repetition drills.
- Tell your students to hold a sheet of paper in front of their mouths to check on the puff of air when they say such words as put, pick, tooth, kick.

6. FOCUS:

Indochinese students will produce English final-position consonants in an unreleased fashion. As a result, these final consonants will not be heard at all by Americans. For example, they may say "we wor har" instead of "we work hard."

ACTIVITIES:

- Always pay attention to your students' handling of final consonants.

- Use exaggerated verbatim repetition drills in order to concentrate on final consonants.

7. FOCUS:

Indochinese students may mispronounce /b, d, g/ as /p, t, k,/ when these consonants fall at the end of a word. Hence, they may not be able to differentiate between:

cup	and	cub
but	and	bud
lock	and	log

ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct exaggerated verbatim repetition and same-or-different response drills.

8. FOCUS:

English consonant clusters are another source of difficulty for Indochinese students.

ACTIVITIES:

- Use verbatim repetition drills on such English consonant clusters as /pr-/ , /kr-/ , /str-/ , /-sk-/ , /-st-/ , /-ks/ , /-sks/ , and /-ŋθs/.

9. FOCUS:

Vietnamese and Lao are tone languages. Each syllable in Vietnamese and Lao has an inherent tone in it; consequently, speakers of Vietnamese and Lao may transplant arbitrary tones into English syllables, making them sound peculiar.

ACTIVITIES:

- Monitor your students' pronunciation and provide models as necessary.

MORPHOLOGY

10. FOCUS:

Indochinese nouns do not inflect. Thus, Indochinese learners of English tend to ignore the suffixes /-s₁/ (plural marker) and /-s₂/ (possession marker). In speech, these suffixes are particularly difficult because they have different pronunciations (namely, /-s/ as in books, /-z/ as in cars, and /-əz/ as in boxes) depending on what sound precedes the suffixes.

ACTIVITIES:

- Explain the distribution of /-s/, /-z/, and /-əz/.
- Conduct exaggerated verbatim repetition drills in order to concentrate on the endings.
- Conduct transformation drills in which you provide singular nouns that your students will pluralize.
- Conduct transformation drills in which you provide the possessor and the possessee (Jack-house) which the students will combine into a meaningful phrase (Jack's house).

11. FOCUS:

Indochinese verbs do not inflect. To indicate the concept of time--when necessary--structure words can be placed in front of or after the verb. However, context is often sufficient to imply whether something has happened, is happening, or will be happening. Accordingly, Indochinese students find the English verb tenses difficult to learn. They have trouble with the suffix /-s₃/ (third person singular present tense marker) which happens to have the same pronunciation distribution as the /-s₁/ and /-s₂/ mentioned above.

ACTIVITIES:

- Explain the distribution of /-s/, /-z/ and /-əz/.
- In an exaggerated and light-hearted manner, conduct verbatim repetition drills to maximize concentration on endings of verbs.

12. FOCUS:

The "-ed" ending of regular verbs is another obstacle for Indochinese students to overcome. They tend to ignore this suffix when writing and speaking English. The fact that this suffix has different pronunciations (/t/ as in kissed, /d/ as in hugged, /əd/ as in divided) helps to make spoken English difficult for the Indochinese student.

ACTIVITIES:

- Explain the distribution of /t/, /d/ and /əd/.
- Conduct verbatim repetition and transformation drills.
- Maximize concentration on the "-ed" endings of verbs.

13. FOCUS:

Irregular verbs (break/broke/broken, etc.) constitute a learning problem for Indochinese students, in whose native language verbs are always regular and never inflect.

ACTIVITIES:

- Introduce these irregular verbs to your students gradually.
- Use intensive verbatim repetition, substitution and transformation drills.

SYNTAX

14. FOCUS:

The topic-comment pattern is popular in Indochinese sentences. Indochinese students will transfer this syntactical feature into English

and generate redundant sentences, such as:

"My teacher, she is fantastic."

and

"This lesson here, I feel it is too hard."

ACTIVITIES:

- Explain to your students that such sentences are redundant, awkward and should be avoided, especially in written English.
- Use reduction drills in which you provide the redundant topic-comment sentences that your students will reduce to shorter and more coherent sentences.

15. FOCUS:

The failure by Indochinese students to know what can constitute the subject, verb and object of an English sentence frequently causes them to produce faulty sentences.

ACTIVITIES:

- Explain to your students what can be put into the subject, verb and object slots of a simple sentence in English. Intensive drills are needed.
- Discuss how to combine simple sentences into compound and complex sentences by means of coordinate conjunctions and subordinate conjunctions. Intensive drills are needed.

16. FOCUS:

Negative sentence patterns in English are troublesome to Indochinese students, who are accustomed to a simpler device that serves the same purpose.

ACTIVITIES:

- Catch predictable errors such as "I no can study" and "She not arrive yesterday," and correct them immediately.
- Explain formulas for negative sentences. Intensive drills are needed.

17. FOCUS:

Indochinese syntax generates questions in a very simple manner. Thus, the more complicated English question sentence patterns are difficult for Indochinese students learning English.

ACTIVITIES:

- Immediately correct transfer-related errors such as, "You study yes?" or "You studied how?"
- Teach yes-no questions and WH-questions (questions that begin with a question word like why, how, who, what, etc.) separately, since these two types of questions use different intonation contours.

18. FOCUS:

Of particular difficulty to Indochinese students are complex sentences containing relative clauses. (The man whose son you went to college with has just arrived, etc.)

ACTIVITIES:

- Because Indochinese students tend to ignore English relative pronouns, watch out for errors like, "The man came here last night stole my car" and "He is a nice teacher teaches very well."
- Explain the use of obligatory relative pronouns (i.e., when they are subjects) and the use of optional relative pronouns (i.e., when they are objects).
- Reinforce theories with illustrative examples and plenty of practice.

19. FOCUS:

English punctuation, with its strict rules highly standardized and enforced, is another major obstacle to be overcome by Indochinese students who have been accustomed to a "free-for-all" punctuation system.

ACTIVITIES:

- Impress upon your students that punctuation is a serious matter in English.
- Explain the rules and reinforce them with punctuation practice.

20. FOCUS:

Indochinese students have never been taught the fundamentals of American rhetoric. This and the fact that their past learning style is so different will compound their difficulty in writing compositions in English.

ACTIVITIES:

- The principles of good writing must be spelled out little by little for the Indochinese student.
- A great deal of practice must be done to ensure that the students comprehend the principles of writing in English.

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